

BLAZE GLORY

THE LAST RIDE
OF THE WESTERN HEROES

BOOK ONE



DIRECT EDITION



00111

59606 04835 9

\$2.99 US \$4.50 CAN

JOHN
OSTRANDER

LEONARDO
MANCO

MARVEL
COMICS
M

WWW.MARVEL.COM

THERE IS THE WEST OF FACT.
THERE IS THE WEST OF LEGEND.



THIS STORY FALLS SOMEWHERE IN BETWEEN.

by JOHN OSTRANDER & LEONARDO MANCO

Bullpen - Letters Mariana Manco - Colors

Mark Bernardo with Tom Brevoort - Editors

Bob Harras - Editor in Chief

A Stan Lee Presentation

BLAZE OF GLORY® Vol. 1, No. 1, February 2008. Published by MARVEL COMICS, a division of MARVEL ENTERPRISES, INC. Eric Eisenberg, President, Art Asari, Chief Creative Officer, J. Winstan Fowler, Publisher, Stan Lee, Chairman Emeritus. OFFICE OF PUBLICATION: 567 PARK AVENUE SOUTH, NEW YORK, N.Y. 10016. Published monthly. Copyright © 1999 Marvel Characters, Inc. All rights reserved. Price \$2.99 per copy in the U.S. and \$4.50 in Canada. GST #R127032852. No similarity between any of the names, characters, persons, and/or institutions in this magazine with those of any living or dead person or institution is intended, and any such similarity which may exist is purely coincidental. This periodical may not be sold except by authorized dealers and is sold subject to the condition that it shall not be sold or distributed with any part of its cover or markings removed, nor in a mutilated condition. BLAZE OF GLORY (including all prominent characters featured in this issue and the distinctive likenesses thereof) is a trademark of MARVEL CHARACTERS, INC. Printed in the U.S.A.



This is the
West of fact.

On July 4, 1876,
General George
Armstrong Custer
led his 7th Cavalry
to annihilation at
the Little Big Horn
River in Montana
Territory.

The following year, Hinmaton-
Yalaktit of the Nez Perce --
known to the whites as **Chief
Joseph** -- refused to accept a
treaty forced on them by the
whites and successfully fought
Federal soldiers as he and his
tribe fled towards Canada.

For a thousand miles, they
retreated and fought until,
on October 5, 1877, 30 miles
from the Canadian border,
they were forced to surrender
in Montana Territory.

Weary, Hinmaton-
Yalaktit said, "I will
fight no more forever."



In 1879, African-American settlers fled the South, heading for lands in Kansas and the territories. They were known as the **Exodusters**.

Many would return due to lack of money, inexperience, and hostility, but others would push on, seeking freedom promised by the end of the Civil War.

By 1882, rich copper and silver mines were found in Montana, attracting hordes of men seeking fortunes. There would be a need for water for the smelting factories. The great copper town of **Anaconda** was based on its ability to provide that water.

And on September 8, 1883, the Northern Pacific Railroad was completed, the final spike being driven at Independence Creek, 60 miles west of Helena, Montana Territory.

The West was rapidly becoming settled. The frontier was rapidly being closed. Times were changing and whole ways of life were changing with them.

There are also the men whose lives gave birth to the West of legend and whose legends became more real than their lives. Men such as...

Gunhawk—a bounty hunter who seemed to work on the side of justice; no one seemed to know his true name.

Wyatt Earp—lawman, gunman, gambler—his name is inextricably linked with the town of Tombstone and the OK Corral.

Reno Jones, an ex-slave who drifted West with his partner after the Civil War, disappearing from sight after his partner was gunned down.

Buffalo Bill—government scout and showman who made himself into a legend and created the Wild West show.

Ghost Rider—the one the Indians called He-Who-Rides-the-Night-Winds. A glowing spectral avenger whom bullets, it was said, could not touch.

Caleb Hammer—former preacher turned Pinkerton agent, seeking salvation in the blaze of the six gun.

Wild Bill Hickock—gunfighter, lawman, and most say the deadliest gun in the West.

Billy the Kid—William Bonney, achieved fame (or infamy) for the number of men he killed despite his youth.

The Outlaw Kid—the identity adopted by Lance Temple, who was torn between a promise he made to his father not to take up the gun and the desire to see justice done.

Kid Colt killed the men who ambushed his father but that put a price on his head. The only thing more deadly than his guns, many said, was his temper.

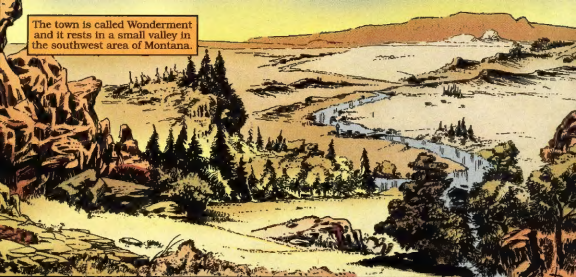
Rawhide Kid—avenging his uncle who was shot down by gunslingers in the town of Rawhide, Johnny Bart rode on both sides of the law, championing those who needed his quick wits and even quicker gun.

The Two Gun Kid, created by lawyer Matt Hawk to bring justice where the law could not.

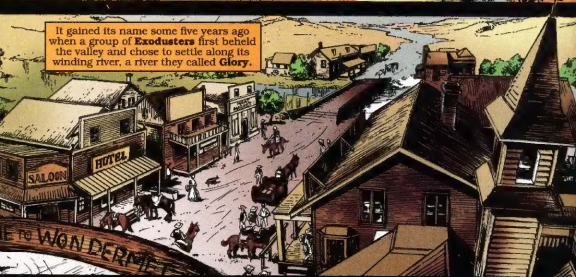
Red Wolf—raised between the white man's world and red man's, trusted by neither, striving for a peace between the races that few seemed to want.

This story is of some of these men, of the men behind the legends, and the summer of 1885 when their paths crossed—one last time.





The town is called Wonderment and it rests in a small valley in the southwest area of Montana.



It gained its name some five years ago when a group of **Exodusters** first beheld the valley and chose to settle along its winding river, a river they called **Glory**.



Ex-slaves and poor whites, owning nothing, some once owned themselves, came together and created a town and they have thrived... until now.

Now it is 1885 -- and hell is about to descend on Wonderment.

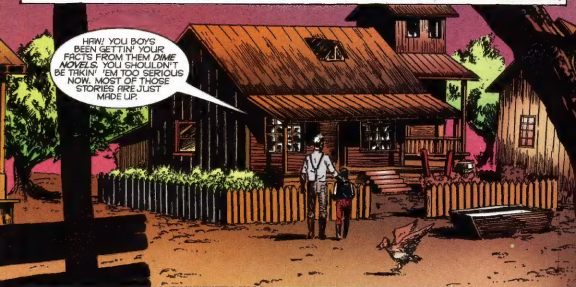
BANG!
BANG! I GOT
YOU, CASS!





CASS,
YOU WANT TO
TELL ME WHAT THAT
WAS ALL ABOUT?
HUBIE'S YOUR BEST
FRIEND.

AW, HE
SAID KID COLT WAS
BETTER'N THE RAWHIDE KID
AND EV'BODY KNOWS
THAT'S WRONG! MADE
ME MAD!



HAW! YOU BOYS
BEEN GETTIN' YOUR
FACTS FROM THEM DIME
NOVELS. YOU SHOULDN'T
BE THKIN' 'EM TOO SERIOUS
NOW. MOST OF THOSE
STORIES ARE JUST
MADE UP.



YOU
ABOUT READY
FOR SUPPER,
RENO?



I'M ABOUT
HALF PAST
READY, MARY.
WAN'TA GET
SOMETHIN' TO
SHOW TH' BOY
FIRST.



DIDN'T
KNOW YOUR PA
WAS THE SUBJECT
OF ONE OF THEM DIME
NOVELS, DID YOU, CASS?
HERE IT IS. RENO JONES
AND KID CASSIDY—
GUNHAWKS.



IS THIS
REALLY
ABOUT
YOU,
PA?



IT'S ABOUT
SOMEBODY NAMED
RENO JONES. THEY
SAY IT'S ABOUT
ME.



I DON'T
KNOW *WHY*
YOU'RE
SHOWING
HIM THAT
FOOL STORY,
RENO. NOT
A LICK OF
TRUTH IN
IT!



BUT...IT'S
IN A *BOOK*!
DOESN'T
THAT MEAN
IT *HAS* TO
BE TRUE?



NOT
NEARLY.

ACCORDING
TO *THAT* BOOK,
I WAS A *HAPPY* SLAVE.
SO HAPPY I DIDN'T EVEN
KNOW I *WAS* A SLAVE. MY
OL' MASSA TREATED ME SO
GOOD--JUST LIKE HIS
OWN SON, IT
SAYS.

IT ALSO
SAYS THAT WHEN
THEM YANKEES BURNED
DOWN THE PLANTATION
AND STOLE MY WOMAN,
I UP AND JOINED THE
CONFEDERATE
ARMY.

AND, AFTER
THE WAR, ME AND
MY MASSA'S SON,
KID CASSIDY, RODE THE
WEST TOGETHER. JUST
LIKE BROTHERS. HA!
LET ME TELL YOU
HOW IT *REALLY*
WAS.



My Ma was a Mammy at the time and, yes, the Massa's son and I played together some when we was boys.



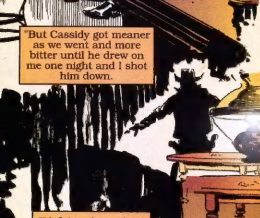
"But as we grew older he didn't pay me any more mind than he did any of the other house slaves. And then the War broke out.



The Ol' Massa died during the War and when his son come back home, there weren't much left but the house. No good reason for him to stay. Me neither.



We **did** ride out together. Some of our memories of being boys together resurfaced. For awhile, it was all right.



But Cassidy got meaner as we went and more bitter until he drew on me one night and I shot him down.



"I left him lying there and rode out. I knew how those townfolk would deal with a colored man shoot down a white man."



SO
YOU KILLED
KID CASSIDY,
PR?

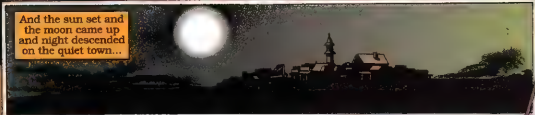


MEBBE, MEBBE
NOT. HEARD SOME
TALES LATER...

YOU
MEET ANY OF THE
OTHER LEGENDS LIKE
BILL HICKOCK OR WYATT
EARP OR JEB KENT
OR JESSE JAMES
OR...?



ENOUGH
OF THIS KIND
OF TALK. TIME
TO EAT!



And the sun set and
the moon came up
and night descended
on the quiet town...



...and with it, a
different sort of
darkness.

MOON'S
UP.

RAISE
A YELL AND KILL
ANYTHING THAT
MOVES.



YEEEEEEHAW!

BLAM

BLAM

BLAM

POW

They ride in screaming the old Rebel Yell, a cry designed to curdle the blood, and everything is fire and smoke and flying lead!

The hoods and cloaks are chosen to remind the ex-slaves why they left the South, trying to escape the hatred and brutality of those known as Nightriders!

Their very appearance is designed to terrify and scatter the Exodusters, to make them feel weak and helpless -- and some do. But not all of them. No, sir -- not all!



They ride in screaming the old Rebel Yell, a cry designed to curdle the blood, and everything is fire and smoke and flying lead!

The hoods and cloaks are chosen to remind the ex-slaves **why** they left the South, trying to escape the hatred and brutality of those known as **Nightriders!**



BLAM

BOOM

MEAT

Their very appearance is designed to terrify and scatter the Exodusters, to make them feel weak and helpless -- and some do. But not all of them.

No, sir -- not all!







No answers are
forthcoming in
the days that
follow...

... only more horror...
more terror... as the
raids continue both in
the town and at
outlying farms...

... bringing memories
of hooded and masked
atrocities that caused
these people to flee
their birthplaces.

It has followed
them even here
and Wonderment
gives way to des-
peration... and
anger...



ALL
RIGHT, FOLKS--
LET'S SETTLE DOWN!
WE ALL TALK AT
ONCE AND NOTHIN'
IS GONNA BE
HEARD.



WE ALL KNOW
WHY WE'RE HERE--
THESE NIGHTRIDERS. WE
NEED TO TALK ABOUT WHAT
ALL HAS HAPPENED AND
WHAT WE WANT TO
DO ABOUT IT!

EZEKIEL
HESTON, YOU
HAVE THE
FLOOR.



DANG IT,
RENO, WE ALL
KNOW WHAT'S GOING
ON! THESE NIGHTRIDERS
COME IN AND BURN THINGS
DOWN AND SHOOT PEOPLE
OR LYNCH 'EM! BUT
THEY DON'T SAY WHY!
WHAT IS IT THEY
WANT?



DEY
WANT YOU
T'DIE--OR
T'RUN.

SOME OF
YOU KNOW ME,
EH? FOR DOSE WHO
DON'T-- MARCEL
FOURNIER I AM,
FRENCH-CANADIAN
TRAPPER
SOMETIMES, I SEE
T'INGS LIKE DIS
BEFORE.

SOMET'ING
ABOUT DIS LAND
DEY WANT. YOU ON
DE LAND, SO YOU
GOT TO GO MEN
LIKE DIS, YOU RUN
OR DEY KILL YOU,
EH? DAT'S
ALL.





WHAT'S IN
THE LAND? GOLD?
SILVER? ANACONDA
COPPER MINE ISN'T
ALL THAT FAR AWAY
AND THAT'S MADE
MEN RICH.



I AM
FLAMING STAR
AND I SPEAK FOR
MY PEOPLE. WE
KNOW. WHITE MAN
SEES SOMETHING HE
WANTS, WHITE MAN
TAKES IT.



HOW DO
WE *FIGHT* MEN
LIKE THAT? I'M
WILLING BUT THESE
ARE STONE KILLERS,
RENO! MEBBE WE
SHOULD JUST
LEAVE...



AND GO
WHERE? MAYBE
WE SHOULD CALL
ON THE ARMY
FOR HELP!



YOU FOLKS
BEFRIENDED DE NEZ
PERCE IN DERE FLIGHT, AND
STILL HELP OTHER RED
MEN. ARMY NOT GONNA
HELP YOU.



THEN
WE GET SOME
MEN GOOD WITH
THEIR GUNS. I
KNOW *ONE* AND HE
KNOWS OTHERS.
FIGHT FIRE WITH
FIRE.



HIRE
GUNS?
IS THAT
REALLY
WHAT WE
WANT?



OUR PEOPLE
OWE THIS TOWN MUCH. I
ALSO KNOW ONE WHO MAY
BE ABLE TO HELP. WE WILL
SPREAD THE WORD AND
ASK FOR HIM.



ME,
I ALSO KNOW
A MAN. I RIDE
WITH YOU, RENO
JONES. WHAT HARM
CAN IT DO TO
ASK, EH?

Come the next dawn, two men rode out of Wonderment, through the mountains surrounding it...

RELAX, MON
RMI...

CAN'T, FOURNIER!
GET THE FEELING I'M IN
SOMEBODY'S CROSSHAIRS
AND THAT MAKES ME A
LITTLE SKITTISH.

HEH,
DO NOT WORRY.
IT IS THE COMING
BACK THAT WILL BE
THE PROBLEM,
NON?

GOT ME
TWO BUCKS ALL
LINED UP.

LET 'EM
BE. THEY GOIN'
IN THE RIGHT
DIRECTION.

GIVE TH'
OTHERS SOME
ENCOURAGE-
MENT.

Two days later...

SO, YOU
TALK WIT' DE
COMMANDANT,
RENO JONES?

YEAH,
WENT PRETTY MUCH
LIKE YOU PREDICTED.
NOT GOING TO GIVE HELP
TO NO BLACK FOLKS
THAT SHELTER RED
FOLKS.

SO NOW
WE SPLIT UP,
EH? YOU GO TALK
WIT' YO' GUNMAN,
IF YOU CAN FIND
HIM, AND I TALK
WIT' MINE.



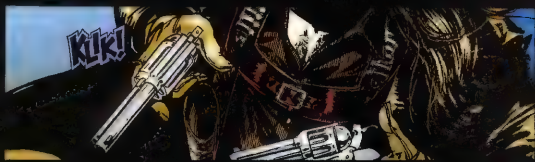
Two days later...
at Buffalo Bill's
Wild West Show...

BUFFALO BILL'S SHOW

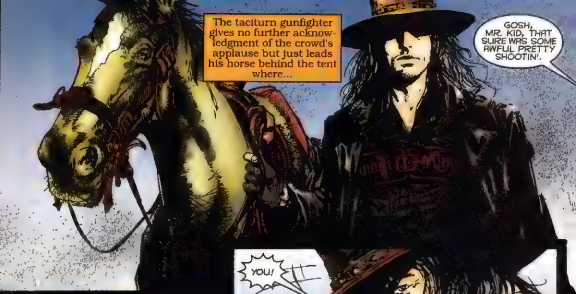
LADIES AND
GENTLEMEN...
IF I CAN DI-RECT
YOUR ATTENTION
TO THE CENTER
RING...











The taciturn gunfighter gives no further acknowledgment of the crowd's applause but just leads his horse behind the tent where...

GOSH, MR. KID, THAT SURE WAS SOME AWFUL PRETTY SHOOTIN'.

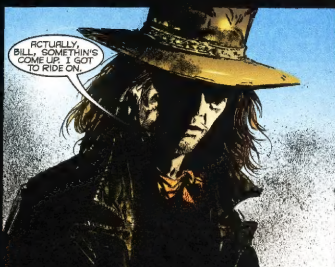
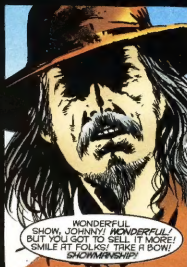


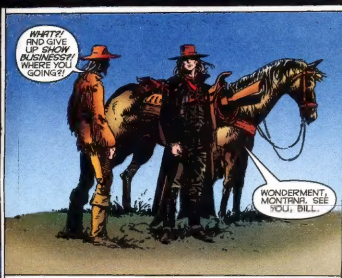
YOU!



KID COLT!

NOT SO LOUD WITH THAT ARME, PARD, FOLKS LOOKIN' FOR ME THAT I DON'T NEED T'SEE.





SITUATION
CALLS FOR A COOL
HAND AND YOU GOT
A HOT TEMPER.

SO
YOU CAN'T
COME.

THE HELL I
CAN'T! THIS HERE IS A
FREE COUNTRY AND IF I FEEL
LIKE GOIN' TO WONDERMENT,
MONTANA THEN YOU DAMN
WELL CAN'T STOP ME,
JOHNNY BART!



LOOKS
LIKE HE'S
FIXIN' T'
FOLLOW.



THOUGHT
HE MIGHT.



WIRED
ANOTHER FRIEND
T'MEET US UP BY THE
FORT. PROBLEM IS--
THIS ONE'S NOT
QUITE RIGHT.



DAMN YOU,
BART! REIN IN
OR BY GOD I'LL
PUT A BULLET IN
YOUR SKULL!



EXCUSE ME,
MR. CODY, BUT
I'M LOOKING FOR
SOMEONE.

THAT
RIGHT? WHO
WOULD THAT
BE AND WHO
ARE YOU,
MISTER?



OH...I COULD
GIVE YOU A PICK OF
NAMES. LEE BARNETT'S
GOOD AS ANY. SOME
FOLKS REFER TO ME
AS GUNHAWK.

I'M LOOKIN'
FOR THE
RAWHIDE KID.

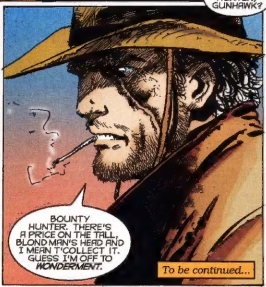


TO BE
HONEST, I'M
REALLY LOOKIN'
FOR A TALL, BLOND
MAN SAID TO BE
MEETIN' UP
WITH HIM.



SAW HIM. HE
AND JOHNNY LEFT
JUST A SHORT WHILE
AGO. SAID SOMETHING
ABOUT GOING UP TO
WONDERMENT,
MONTANA.

LAWMAN
OR BOUNTY
HUNTER,
GUNHAWK?



BOUNTY
HUNTER. THERE'S
A PRICE ON THE TALL,
BLOND MAN'S HEAD AND
I MEAN T'COLLECT IT.
GUESS I'M OFF TO
WONDERMENT.

To be continued...